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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,
DECEMBER 20, 2002

¶11. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 20, 2002. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

¶12. PROPOSED ANTI-WAR RALLY IN ADANA BANNED

(Bolge) The Adana Security Directorate has reportedly cancelled the proposed anti-war rally to be held by the Adana War Opponents Platform on December 22. Two different newspapers reported different reasons for the cancellation. Bolge cited a soccer match, while Evrensel reported that the Adana Governor's office had refused to grant permission due to sensitivity of the situation in Iraq, existence of a U.S. base and consulate in Adana, intelligence that illegal groups might provoke the rally, and personal security of American citizens.

¶13. OPPOSITION TO POSSIBLE U.S. WAR IN IRAQ

(Bolge) Ahmet Kilic, State Employees Union Confederation (KESK) Term Spokesperson and Haber-Sen Union Adana chapter President, voiced opposition to the proposed U.S. operation against Iraq, saying oil resources underlie U.S.' current Iraq policies. "People ruling Turkey must under no condition side with the U.S. aggression," Kilic added. He also called for the closure of Adana's Incirlik Air Base and cancellation of the Turkey-U.S. and Israel agreement. Evrensel cited the Adiyaman Democracy Platform as calling for a more intense struggle against the proposed war. In a Diyarbakir meeting, KESK National President Sami Evren also expressed opposition to the possible Iraq war.

¶14. ADANA AIRPORT RENOVATION PROJECT DELAYED

(Bolge) In a press release issued by Adana State Airports Administration (DHMI) Director Cengiz Asikli, the repair and maintenance project of the Adana Airport, closed to flights on November 4, was suspended on December 19 due to heavy rainfall. The project will resume after the rain has stopped.

¶15. KURDISH-LANGUAGE SINGERS ACQUITTED

(Radikal/Cumhuriyet/Evrensel) During the December 19 trial, the Diyarbakir State Security Court acquitted nine people, among them seven teachers, charged with "assisting and abetting the PKK" for singing separatist Kurdish-language songs during the Congress of the Diyarbakir chapter of the Teachers Union Egitim-Sen. The acquittal was based on an expert witness report from the state-run Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) saying the songs sung at the Congress were about love, nature and longing.

¶16. USE OF KURDISH NAMES STILL A PROBLEM

(Evrensel) The Mersin Birth Registry Director refused to register the Kurdish name "Zozan" ("Plateau") that parent Ali Askan wanted to give to his four-year-old daughter.

¶17. HASHISH SEIZURE

(Turkiye) Acting on a tip, Batman police seized 15 kilograms of hashish powder, 200 kilograms of hashish, and materials and tools used in producing hashing powder in two separate operations. Five suspects were arrested. In addition, 28.9 kilograms of unprocessed heroin were confiscated in Yuksekova (Hakkari). Four suspects arrested in connection with the confiscation were ordered to remain in custody.

HOLTZ